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1 message

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Mayor Eric Garcetti:

Beverly Hills crash marks LAPD's first on-duty death in 6 years

<http://www.latimes.com/local/la-me-0308-officer-killed-20140308,0,1454306.story#axzz2vKAhRnUb>

LAPD officer killed in crash was a 'great cop', 'family man'

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-lapd-officer-identified-20140307,0,4250720.story#axzz2vKAhRnUb>

LAPD officer is killed, rookie injured in collision with truck in Beverly Hills

<http://www.dailynews.com/general-news/20140307/lapd-officer-is-killed-rookie-is-injured-in-collision-with-truck-in-beverly-hills>

LAPD patrol car 'unrecognizable' after fatal crash with truck

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-lapd-patrol-car-unrecognizable-20140307,0,2051171.story#axzz2vK99KMRW>

LAPD officer killed, partner critical in collision with dump truck

<http://www.dailynews.com/general-news/20140307/lapd-officer-killed-partner-critical-in-collision-with-dump-truck>

<http://www.dailybreeze.com/general-news/20140307/lapd-officer-killed-partner-critical-in-collision-with-dump-truck>

LAPD Police Officer Killed After Patrol Car Collides With Dump Truck

http://laist.com/2014/03/07/lapd_officer_killed_when_squad_car.php

LAPD Officer Dies In Beverly Hills Crash

<http://www.laweekly.com/informer/2014/03/07/lapd-officer-dies-in-beverly-hills-crash>

Accident Kills Police Officer In Beverly Hills, Another Injured

<http://brentwood.patch.com/groups/police-and-fire/p/accident-kills-lapd-officer-in-beverly-hills>

LAPD training officer killed in Beverly Hills crash

<http://www.scpr.org/news/2014/03/07/42665/lapd-officer-killed-in-beverly-hills-crash/>

Mayor's statement on the death of LAPD officer

http://www.iaobserved.com/archive/2014/03/mayors_statement_on_the_d.php

Maintenance Records Probed In Deadly Crash

<http://www.nbclosangeles.com/investigations/Maintenance-Records-Probed-Deadly-Crash-249098201.html>

LAPD Officer Dies Following Collision Between Patrol Car, Dump Truck In Beverly Hills

<http://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2014/03/07/lapd-officer-dies-following-collision-between-patrol-car-dump-truck-in-beverly-hills/>

LAPD Officer Killed In Collision With Big Rig Identified, 2 Others Injured

<http://ktla.com/2014/03/07/1-officer-killed-1-officer-injured-in-beverly-hills-traffic-collision/>

Loma Vista/ Doheny Rd Crash Leaves 1 LAPD Officer Dead

<http://bhccourier.com/loma-vistadoheny-crash-leaves-lapd-officer-dead/2014/03/07>

Condolences For In For LAPD Officer Who Died In Crash

<http://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/Authorities-Identify-LAPD-Officer-Killed-in-Beverly-Hills-Crash-249067321.html>

Nicholas Lee, LAPD officer was 40

http://www.iaobserved.com/archive/2014/03/nicholas_lee_lapd_hollywo.php

LAPD officer killed in Beverly Hills truck collision

http://abclocal.go.com/kabc/story?section=news/local/los_angeles&id=9458078

Coroner names LAPD training officer killed in Beverly Hills crash

<http://www.scpr.org/news/2014/03/07/42665/lapd-officer-killed-in-beverly-hills-crash/>

Preaching To A Choir: De Blasio And Three Other Big City Mayors Discuss Their Lot In Life

<http://www.nydailynews.com/blogs/node/146794>

De Blasio In Chicago: Way, Way Too Much Public Focus On Charter School Wars

<http://www.nydailynews.com/blogs/theswamp/2014/03/de-blasio-in-chicago-way-way-too-much-public-focus-on-charter-school-wars>

Cheat And Eat Food Stamps

<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304360704579417341357603558>

Watch: Mayors Rahm Emanuel And Eric Garcetti On The Renaissance Of US Cities

<http://politics.uchicago.edu/news/entry/mayors-emanuel-garcetti-renaissance-of-cities>

Emanuel, Big City Mayors Talk Shop, Joke Around

<http://www.chicagobusiness.com/article/20140307/NEWS02/140309823/emanuel-big-city-mayors-talk-shop-joke-around>

Restoring The LA River, One Beer At A Time

<http://lbpost.com/food/2000003420-restoring-the-l-a-river-one-beer-at-a-time>

Warning-Double Check Your Department Of Water And Power Bills

<http://www.yovenice.com/2014/03/07/warning-double-check-your-department-of-water-power-bills/>

Living in Los Angeles will be without funds

<http://www.laopinion.com/noticias-los-angeles-fondos-programas-ancianos>

California Democrats kick off annual convention in Los Angeles

<http://www.latimes.com/local/political/la-california-democratic-convention-20140307,0,178282.story#axzz2vMhJHCQa>

State Democrats to descend on LA for annual party convention

[http://www.latimes.com/local/political/la-me-ln-democrats-la-party-convention-20140307,](http://www.latimes.com/local/political/la-me-ln-democrats-la-party-convention-20140307,0,2052307.story#axzz2vKAhRnUb)

[0,2052307.story#axzz2vKAhRnUb](http://www.latimes.com/local/political/la-me-ln-democrats-la-party-convention-20140307,0,2052307.story#axzz2vKAhRnUb)

Los Angeles Plays Host To California Democratic Party Convention

<http://www.kpbs.org/news/2014/mar/07/los-angeles-plays-host-california-democratic-party/>

Democrats To Tout Calif. Recovery At Downtown LA Convention

<http://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2014/03/07/democrats-to-tout-calif-recovery-at-downtown-la-convention/>

Consultant report is critical of LA City Fire Department

http://wavenewspapers.com/news/article_12f2612e-a62b-11e3-b4a3-001a4bcf6878.html

LA advised to pay \$185,000 to driver hit by Huizar's SUV

<http://www.latimes.com/local/la-me-huizar-crash-20140308,0,1466903.story#axzz2vKAhRnUb>

LA Fashion Week bringing in big names despite lesser known reputation

<http://www.dailynews.com/lifestyle/20140307/la-fashion-week-bringing-in-big-names-despite-lesser-known-reputation>

Elections 2014: Forums, Endorsements

http://www.gazettes.com/news/election-forums-endorsements/article_c8ef28ae-a540-11e3-b1f9-001a4bcf887a.html

Deporter In Chief? Obama's Base Turning Against Him Over Inaction On Immigration

<http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/politics/2014/03/07/deporter-in-chief-president-obama-base-turning-against-him-over-inaction-on/>

LA Times

Beverly Hills crash marks LAPD's first on-duty death in 6 years

By Ruben Vives, Matt Stevens and Kate Mather

A veteran Los Angeles police officer was killed and a rookie cop injured Friday morning when a dump truck slammed into their patrol car in Beverly Hills, marking the department's first on-duty death in six years.

The officers — one a nearly 16-year department veteran, the other three months out of the academy — were responding to a call and heading northbound up a hilly Loma Vista Drive near Robert Lane when their cruiser was struck by the southbound truck about 8 a.m., LAPD officials said.

The truck skidded down the curving Loma Vista Drive, leaving a long stretch of tire marks before it tipped on its side and spilled the small excavator it was carrying. The police cruiser was mangled beyond recognition, with twisted, black-and-white chunks of the vehicle scattered in the street. The top of the cruiser had to be peeled off to remove the officer trapped inside.

"The police car is almost unrecognizable even as a vehicle, let alone a police car," said LAPD Cmdr. Andrew Smith. "It's a miracle that anyone survived."

Officer Nicholas Choung Lee, a 40-year-old married father of two daughters, died at the scene. He had been with the department since 1998, serving in both the Wilshire and Hollywood divisions, and had received 70 department commendations.

LAPD Chief Charlie Beck described him as a family man who was "extremely well-respected."

"A man of greatness and selflessness," Beck tweeted. "Nick was a great cop. May he rest in peace."

What caused the collision remained unclear, though authorities said their initial investigation pointed to a mechanical failure with the truck, perhaps involving its brakes. California Highway Patrol Officer Leland Tang said a "huge question mark" remains about how the truck hit the cruiser: whether it side-swiped the patrol car or actually drove over it.

The impact was so intense, authorities said, that Lee's body was pushed from the driver's seat to the middle of the car. The other officer escaped with a concussion and bruises to her face, and told officials she could be released from the hospital as early as Saturday.

The truck driver was hospitalized in serious condition but expected to survive.

Authorities at the scene — along with Beck and L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti — stopped to salute as Lee's body was pulled from the wreckage, draped in an American flag and taken to a coroner's van. The van detoured to LAPD's Hollywood station, where nearly 100 officers and civilian personnel lined the street, their hands in salute or over their hearts.

LAPD officers wore black mourning bands on their badges as condolences poured in from agencies across the country. Garcetti ordered city flags lowered to half-staff, a move echoed by Beverly Hills.

"We grieve a hero," Garcetti said.

Lee was the first LAPD officer killed on duty since 2008, and the first in Beck's tenure as chief. The two officers most recently killed both died while on military leave in Afghanistan in 2010.

"It's a sad day today in the city of Los Angeles," Beck told reporters.

National statistics showed traffic-related fatalities topped the list of law enforcement deaths last year. According to preliminary data compiled by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, 46 of the 111 officers who died in the line of duty in 2013 were killed in either automobile or motorcycle crashes, or when they were struck outside their vehicle.

Friday's crash came amid LAPD's efforts to improve traffic safety. Department officials have deemed 2014 the "year of traffic," allocating more resources to traffic enforcement.

CHP investigators spent most of the day at the scene, photographing the scattered wreckage and spilled oil, and looking for surveillance cameras that might have caught the crash on tape. Authorities said they were also trying to determine whether the patrol car's sirens and lights were on and how fast both vehicles were traveling. Tang said the truck and patrol car would be examined to help identify what went wrong.

LA Times

LAPD officer killed in crash was a 'great cop', 'family man'

By Kate Mather And Richard Winton

The Los Angeles police officer killed Friday when a truck slammed into his patrol car in Beverly Hills has been identified as a 40-year-old longtime officer.

Los Angeles County coroner's officials identified the officer as Nicholas Choung Lee.

[For the record, 6:03 p.m. PST, March 7, 2014: A previous version of this post misspelled the officer's middle name as Cheong.]

At a newsconference earlier in the day, LAPD Chief Charlie Beck said Lee had worked in LAPD's Wilshire and Hollywood divisions, describing him as a father and "family man" who was "extremely well-respected." Lee had worked for the department since 1998.

"#LAPD Police Officer III Nicholas Lee, Serial No. 34980," Beck tweeted. "A man of greatness and selflessness. Nick was a great cop. May he rest in peace."

Lee was also among the officers recently featured in a birthday video for a 7-year-old Rhode Island boy with leukemia. Lee and a rookie female officer were crossing through Beverly Hills en route to an "unknown trouble call" when the crash occurred about 8 a.m. near Loma Vista Drive and Robert Lane, officials said.

Lee died at the scene. The second officer, just three months out of the academy, suffered a concussion and was expected to be released from the hospital Saturday.

The driver of the truck remains in serious condition at the hospital, LAPD Cmdr. Andrew Smith said.

The California Highway Patrol is investigating a possible mechanical failure with the truck. The problem may have been related to the brakes, Beck said.

Smith said authorities will be looking at footage from any video cameras in the area as well as analyzing skid marks and interviewing witnesses.

The officers were driving up a hill when they collided with the truck, which was heading down the hill carrying a dumpster and a Bobcat.

"As the officers were going up, somehow the truck stuck their car," he said, adding that they appeared to collide head-on.

CHP Officer Leland Tang said debris and the speedometer of the truck will also help determine how fast the truck was traveling down Loma Vista Drive.

At the scene, skid marks stretch from Drury Lane to Doheny Road, where the truck came to a stop and on its side. The marks cross into both southbound and northbound lanes.

Most of the damage to the police cruiser is on the driver's side. Rescuers had to remove the top of the car to extricate the officers trapped inside.

Tang said investigators plan to dismantle the truck and cruiser to analyze the vehicles.

Several hours after the crash, Beck and Mayor Eric Garcetti accompanied the body as it was removed from his wrecked patrol car and taken to a coroner's van.

Two rows of officers lined the Beverly Hills street to salute the fallen officer. About 100 uniformed officers and civilian employees lined the street outside the Hollywood Station as the van rolled by.

Garcetti asked that flags across the city be lowered to half-staff. By midmorning they had already been lowered outside the LAPD's downtown headquarters.

"On behalf of the city, we grieve a hero this morning, an officer who gave his life in the service of the people of Los Angeles," Garcetti said.

Daily News

LAPD officer is killed, rookie injured in collision with truck in Beverly Hills

By Kelly Goff

A veteran Los Angeles Police Department officer was killed and a rookie was injured Friday morning when their patrol car collided with a dump truck in Beverly Hills, possibly due to a brake failure on the truck.

The crash occurred around 8 a.m. near the intersection of Loma Vista Drive and Robert Lane. The male training officer — identified by the coroner as 40-year-old Nicholas Choung Lee — died at the scene, while the second officer, a female on the force just three months and still on probation, was transported to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. Both were from LAPD's Hollywood Division.

Police Chief Charlie Beck and Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti visited the injured officer — who has not been publicly identified — at the hospital and said she will survive.

"She is alert, in considerable pain from injuries that she will survive," Beck said outside the hospital. "They don't require surgery. She has a tremendous heart. She is determined to recover from her injuries."

The driver of the truck was also transported to the hospital with injuries and is also expected to survive.

Lee, a 16-year-veteran of LAPD, was married with two young daughters. His past assignments had included Van Nuys,

Wilshire and Hollywood and he had received over 70 commendations, according to the department.

"Nick was a great cop," Beck said. "His hard work, dedication and leadership helped mold young police officers into law enforcement professionals. Nick's death is a great loss to our police family, all of law enforcement and the residents of Los Angeles.

Beck said investigators are still looking into the cause of the collision, but early reports indicated the driver of the dump truck may have lost control due to a brake failure. He noted the steepness of that stretch of winding Loma Vista Drive, which is one of the few in the Los Angeles area with warning signs for truck drivers.

While the crash occurred in Beverly Hills, Beck noted it is common for officers to cross city lines in the area. He said the two officers were en route to a call of "unknown trouble" at the time of the crash and was unsure if they had on lights and sirens.

Garcetti described the probationary officer as "very brave, very alert" during their visit. He has ordered flags to be flown at half-mast throughout the city in honor of the officer who was killed.

"We grieve a hero this morning," the mayor said. "An officer gave his life in the service of the people of Los Angeles. Every officer in uniform, Los Angeles Police Department and any police officer in this city and this county, every single time they suit up, it could be their last day — and today it was."

"The folks in Hollywood Division, which as a council member I represented for a long time, I know are grieving, and I hope people will keep the family, as well as fellow officers and friends, in their prayers. The chief and I were able to visit with his partner, and she's strong, she's going to make it through this."

Beck and Garcetti also visited the site of the collision, where they accompanied the officer's body as it was moved from the wrecked cruiser to a waiting coroner's van. The van was escorted by a dozen motor officers and several patrol cars as it made its way from the scene. The caravan passed the LAPD's Hollywood Station, where about 100 uniformed and civilian employees lined up to salute the procession.

Tyler Izen, president of the Los Angeles Police Protective League, the union that represents the department's rank-and-file officers, issued a statement of support for the training officer's family and the recovering probationary officer.

"With sad hearts we mourn the loss of the brave and courageous police officer who died this morning in a traffic collision," he said. "The officer's death is a tragic loss that reminds us of the risks that law enforcement officers take every day to keep our community safe. His service and sacrifice will never be forgotten. On behalf of all LAPD officers, our hearts and condolences go out to his family and friends and the entire LAPD family who feels his loss so deeply." City News Service contributed to this report.

LA Times

LAPD patrol car 'unrecognizable' after fatal crash with truck

By Ruben Vives, Matt Stevens and Kate Mather

Los Angeles police officials said it is "a miracle" a second officer survived a fatal crash with a big rig that left the patrol car a mangled piece of metal.

"The police car is almost unrecognizable even as a vehicle, let alone a police car," LAPD Cmdr. Andrew Smith said. "It's a miracle that anyone survived this collision."

The officers were crossing through Beverly Hills en route to an "unknown trouble call" when the crash occurred about 8 a.m. near Loma Vista Drive and Robert Lane, officials said.

A male officer driving the patrol car, a 16-year veteran who worked in the Hollywood Division, died at the scene. A second officer, just three months out of the academy, suffered a concussion. She is expected to be released from the hospital tomorrow.

The driver of the truck remains in serious condition at the hospital, he said.

The California Highway Patrol is investigating a possible mechanical failure with the truck. LAPD Chief Charlie Beck said at a news conference that the problem may have been related to the brakes.

Smith said authorities will be looking at footage from any video cameras in the area as well as analyzing skid marks and interviewing witnesses.

The officers were driving up a hill when they collided with the truck, which was heading down the hill carrying a dumpster and a Bobcat.

"As the officers were going up, somehow the truck stuck their car," he said, adding that they appeared to collide head-on.

CHP Officer Leland Tang said debris and the speedometer of the truck will also help determine how fast the truck was traveling down Loma Vista Drive.

At the scene, skid marks stretch from Drury Lane to Doheny Road, where the truck came to a stop and on its side. The marks cross into both southbound and northbound lanes.

Most of the damage to the police cruiser is on the driver's side. Rescuers had to remove the top of the car to extricate the officers trapped inside.

Tang said investigators plan to dismantle the truck and cruiser to analyze the vehicles.

Several hours after the crash, Beck and Mayor Eric Garcetti accompanied the body as it was removed from his wrecked patrol car and taken to a coroner's van.

Two rows of officers lined the Beverly Hills street to salute the fallen officer. About 100 uniformed officers and civilian employees lined the street outside the Hollywood Station as the van rolled by.

Garcetti asked that flags across the city be lowered to half-staff. By midmorning they had already been lowered outside the LAPD's downtown headquarters.

"On behalf of the city, we grieve a hero this morning, an officer who gave his life in the service of the people of Los

Angeles," Garcetti said.

Daily News & Daily Breeze

LAPD officer killed, partner critical in collision with dump truck

By Kelly Goff

A veteran Los Angeles Police Department officer was killed and a rookie recently out of the academy was seriously injured Friday morning when their patrol car collided with a dump truck in Beverly Hills, possibly due to a brake failure on the truck.

The crash occurred around 8 a.m. near the intersection of Loma Vista Drive and Robert Lane, and a training officer and probationary officer from LAPD's Hollywood Division were in the patrol car at the time of the collision.

The male training officer, a decade-long veteran of the force, died at the scene. The second officer, a female probationary officer who has been on the force just three months, was transported to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. They have not been publicly identified.

Police Chief Charlie Beck and Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti visited the injured officer at the hospital, and said she will survive.

"She is alert, in considerable pain from injuries that she will survive," Beck said outside the hospital. "They don't require surgery. She has a tremendous heart. She is determined to recover from her injuries."

The driver of the truck was also transported to the hospital with serious injuries and is expected to survive.

The police chief praised the officer who was killed, a more than 10-year veteran Beck said was "extremely well respected."

"It's a sad day today in the city of Los Angeles and the whole region," he said.

Beck said investigators are still investigating the cause of the collision, but early reports indicated the driver of the dump truck may have lost control due to a brake failure. He noted the steepness of that stretch of winding Loma Vista Drive, which is one of the few in the Los Angeles area with warning signs for truck drivers.

While the collision occurred in Beverly Hills, Beck noted it is common for officers to cross city lines in the area. He said the two officers were en route to a call of "unknown trouble" at the time of crash.

Mayor Eric Garcetti described the probationary officer as "very brave, very alert" during their visit. He has ordered flags to be flown at half-mast throughout the city in honor of the officer who was killed.

"We grieve a hero this morning," Garcetti said. "An officer gave his life in the service of the people of Los Angeles. Every officer in uniform, Los Angeles Police Department and any police officer in this city and this county, every single time they suit up, it could be their last day, and today it was."

"The folks in Hollywood Division, which as a council member I represented for a long time, I know are grieving and I hope people will keep the family as well as fellow officers and friends in their prayers. The chief and I were able to visit with his partner and she's strong, she's going to make it through this."

Beck and Garcetti also visited the site of the collision. The Coroner's van carrying the veteran officer was escorted by a dozen motor officers and several patrol cars as it made its way from Beverly Hills to East Los Angeles.

Tyler Izen, president of the Los Angeles Police Protective League, the union that represents rank-and-file officers in the department, issued a statement of condolences for the training officer's family and support for the recovering probationary officer.

"With sad hearts we mourn the loss of the brave and courageous police officer who died this morning in a traffic collision," Izen said. "The officer's death is a tragic loss that reminds us of the risks that law enforcement officers take every day to keep our community safe. His service and sacrifice will never be forgotten. On behalf of all LAPD officers, our hearts and condolences go out to his family and friends and the entire LAPD family who feels his loss so deeply."

LAist

LAPD Police Officer Killed After Patrol Car Collides With Dump Truck

An LAPD officer was killed and another critically injured this morning in a collision involving their police cruiser and a dump truck in Beverly Hills.

The crash happened at 8 a.m. this morning at the Loma Vista Drive/Robert Lane intersection, KTLA reports. Aerial scenes show the police car completely smashed and the big rig in several pieces resting on its side, according to CBS. A female officer who was in the car was transported to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in critical condition. The condition of the driver is unknown. Officers have been at the hospital awaiting word on her condition, NBC says.

Both of the officers were based out of the Hollywood station, City News Service reports.

A Beverly Hills Police spokesman told NBC 4 that Loma Vista Drive is currently closed while the investigation continues.

UPDATE 11 A.M.: The Los Angeles Times is reporting that the officer killed was a veteran training officer. The injured officer is a probationary officer in training. Chief Charlie Beck called the officer "well-regarded" and said that he was well-liked among his colleagues at the Hollywood Division.

During a press conference, Mayor Garcetti said that the female officer was only on the job for three months, but confirmed that she will survive her injuries.

The officers were responding to an "unknown trouble call" and were traveling through Beverly Hills when the accident happened, Beck said. The accident seems to have stemmed from a brake failure from the truck.

LA Weekly

LAPD Officer Dies In Beverly Hills Crash

An LAPD patrol car was hit by a trash hauler that might have lost its brakes in Beverly Hills this morning, killing an officer inside and putting his partner in the hospital with critical injuries, authorities said.

The collision at at Robert Lane and Loma Vista Drive near Beverly Hills' historic Greystone Mansion was reported at 8 a.m., LAPD Officer Rosario Herrera told us.

That's only a few blocks ...

... from LAPD territory to the east. Herrera says the duo was responding to a report of "unknown trouble" when the accident occurred.

The pair is assigned to the Hollywood Division, which patrols that L.A. city area to the east.

The officer who died at the scene was described by LAPD Chief Charlie Beck as an "over decade-long veteran of the Los Angeles Police Department ... well respected."

The other officer was three months out of the academy, Beck said. The man was her training officer. The LAPD union known as the Los Angeles Police Protective League said she was a probationary officer. Herrera said she was hospitalized in critical condition.

Beck said the tractor-trailer truck was a "trash hauler." He said the truck's brakes might have failed. The California Highway Patrol was heading up the crash investigation, Herrera told us.

Asked if they were looking at the big-rig's brakes, a CHP officer told us, "They're looking at everything."

Herrera said the driver of the "big rig lost control and collided with a Hollywood black-and-white." The L.A. Fire Department responded and made a physical rescue, according to that department.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti issued this statement:

This tragedy reminds us of the selflessness of our LAPD officers who put their lives on the line everyday to protect us. Amy's and my thoughts and condolences are with the families and all of their LAPD brothers and sisters today.

LAPPL president Tyler Izen said this:

With sad hearts we mourn the loss of the brave and courageous police officer who died this morning in a traffic collision. The officer's death is a tragic loss that reminds us of the risks that law enforcement officers take every day to keep our community safe. His service and sacrifice will never be forgotten. On behalf of all LAPD officers, our hearts and condolences go out to his family and friends and the entire LAPD family who feels his loss so deeply.

[Added at 2:02 p.m.]: Beverly Hills police Lt. Lincoln Hoshino told us that the big-rig might have also been pulling a Bobcat-type tractor behind it.

He added:

We suspect it's the brakes, but you don't know at this point.

Patch

Accident Kills Police Officer In Beverly Hills, Another Injured

By City News Service

A veteran Los Angeles police training officer was killed today and a rookie officer just three months out of the academy was injured when their cruiser collided with a dump truck that may have lost its brakes in Beverly Hills.

The crash near Robert Lane and Loma Vista Drive was reported about 8 a.m., according to the Beverly Hills Police Department. The training officer died at the scene. A female probationary officer was critically injured and taken to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, but she was expected to survive, LAPD Chief Charlie Beck said.

The truck driver was also injured, but he is also expected to recover, Beck said.

"It's a sad day today in the city of Los Angeles and the whole region," Beck said outside the hospital. "Two Los Angeles police officers responding to a call of unknown trouble assigned to Hollywood Division were involved in a catastrophic traffic collision with a truck trailer, a trash hauler. That accident resulted in a fatality of one of our officers, over a decade-long veteran of the Los Angeles Police Department, extremely well-respected."

Beck said the female officer had graduated from the Police Academy about three months ago.

"She is alert, in considerable pain from injuries that she will survive," he said. "They don't require surgery. She has a tremendous heart. She is determined to recover from her injuries."

Beck declined to discuss the circumstances of the crash, but said the brakes may have failed on the dump truck on the winding hill. The truck wound up on its side.

The names of the officers were not immediately released.

The crash occurred about one block over the Beverly Hills border near the Hollywood Hills. Beck noted that it is common for officers to cross borders.

The body of the dead officer was removed from the wreckage shortly after noon. Officers and firefighters at the scene stood at attention as the flag-draped body was wheeled into a coroner's van. The van was then led in a procession that passed the LAPD Hollywood Division, where officers and employees stood outside to pay their respects.

Beck and Mayor Eric Garcetti both visited the injured officer at the hospital. Garcetti ordered city flags to be flown at half-staff in honor of the fallen officer.

"We grieve a hero this morning," Garcetti said. "An officer gave his life in the service of the people of Los Angeles. Every officer in uniform, Los Angeles Police Department and any police officer in this city and this county, every single time they suit up, it could be their last day, and today it was."

"The folks in Hollywood Division, which as a council member I represented for a long time, I know are grieving and I hope people will keep the family as well as fellow officers and friends in their prayers. The chief and I were able to visit with his partner and she's strong, she's going to make it through this."

Tyler Izen, president of the Los Angeles Police Protective League, the union that represents LAPD officers, said the crash was a reminder of the dangers faced by police daily.

"His service and sacrifice will never be forgotten," Izen said. "On behalf of all LAPD officers, our hearts and condolences go out to his family and friends and the entire LAPD family who feels his loss so deeply."

KPCC

LAPD training officer killed in Beverly Hills crash

A 10-year veteran officer of the Los Angeles Police Department has been killed and a rookie officer critically injured when their patrol car collided with a large commercial truck at an intersection in Beverly Hills.

The accident occurred around 8 a.m. near Robert Lane and Loma Vista Drive and involved a patrol car from the Hollywood division and a large truck, according to LAPD spokesman Richard French.

As of late morning, police were not releasing names but said a male training officer was pronounced dead at the scene and a female trainee was rushed to the hospital in critical condition.

LAPD Chief Charlie Beck told reporters late Friday morning that the trainee was alert and in considerable pain from her injuries but will survive. This was her first year on the job and she was very shaken by the accident, but she did not require surgery, Beck said.

The driver of the truck was also taken to the hospital in critical condition, French said earlier.

The training officer was extremely well-regarded and a family man with children, Beck said. Police were still in the process of notifying family members.

In a statement, Mayor Eric Garcetti said, "This tragedy reminds us of the selflessness of our LAPD officers who put their lives on the line everyday to protect us. Amy's and my thoughts and condolences are with the families and all of their LAPD brothers and sisters today."

The circumstances of the crash were under investigation, but Beck said preliminary findings indicated that the accident may have been caused by a brake failure on the part of the truck. The neighborhood was known by residents to have very steep streets, and it is a difficult area for truck drivers to drive in, Beck said.

Beck described the truck as a large tractor hauling a container normally used for trash and said it may have also had a Bobcat attached to the back.

The officers had been responding to a very high priority radio call, but it was unclear whether they had their lights and siren going when the accident occurred, Beck said.

The Los Angeles Police Protective League released the following statement in response to the news:

"With sad hearts we mourn the loss of the brave and courageous police officer who died this morning in a traffic collision," LAPPL President Tyler Izen said. "The officer's death is a tragic loss that reminds us of the risks that law enforcement officers take every day to keep our community safe. His service and sacrifice will never be forgotten. On behalf of all LAPD officers, our hearts and condolences go out to his family and friends and the entire LAPD family who feels his loss so deeply."

"We also wish the female probationary officer who was injured a speedy recovery as she receives the appropriate medical treatment," Izen said. "We urge all Los Angeles residents to keep both families in their thoughts and prayers during this difficult period."

LA Observed

Mayor's statement on the death of LAPD officer

By Kevin Roderick

Mayor Eric Garcetti's office just released a statement on the death of a Los Angeles Police Department officer in a Beverly Hills crash this morning. The officer's name has not yet been released.

"This tragedy reminds us of the selflessness of our LAPD officers who put their lives on the line everyday to protect us. Amy's and my thoughts and condolences are with the families and all of their LAPD brothers and sisters today.

The Amy referred to is Amy Wakeland, Garcetti's wife.

NBC Los Angeles

Maintenance Records Probed In Deadly Crash

By Joel Grover

Law enforcement believe that the brakes on the tractor-trailer might have been faulty.

The NBC4 I-Team learned that the California Highway Patrol is investigating a potential safety problem with the truck, as a cause of the crash

CHP investigators were at the Pacoima home of Roberto Mendoza, the driver and owner of the tractor-trailer in this deadly crash.

The CHP is there to help the LAPD maintenance records on the ill-fated truck.

Investigators want to know if it was well maintained at the time of Friday's crash.

Mendoza ran his small trucking business out of this home.

As NBC4 was there, Mendoza's wife, Maria, showed up, returning home from the hospital where her husband was recovering from injuries suffered in the crash.

Maria Mendoza is cooperating with law enforcement, turning over the requested documents, officials said.

Investigators have a long list of records they want to obtain. If Maria Mendoza doesn't produce all those records, they'll get a search warrant, sources said.

The Mendoza family had no comment.

CBS Los Angeles

LAPD Officer Dies Following Collision Between Patrol Car, Dump Truck In Beverly Hills

An LAPD officer was killed and another officer was injured Friday morning when a dump truck collided with their patrol car.

The accident took place around 8 a.m. at the intersection of Loma Vista Drive and Robert Lane in Beverly Hills when the driver of the truck apparently lost control of the vehicle and struck the police cruiser, according to the Los Angeles Police Department.

A male officer, who had served on the force for 16 years, died at the scene, according to LAPD Media Relations. He was identified by the Los Angeles County Coroner's office as 40-year-old Nicholas Lee. During his tenure, Officer Lee had received over 70 commendations, according to the LAPD.

A female officer and the driver of the truck were transported to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. Both officers were from LAPD's Hollywood Division.

"On behalf of the city, we grieve a hero this morning," Mayor Eric Garcetti said during an 11 a.m. news conference at the hospital, adding that "an officer gave his life to the people of Los Angeles in service."

Garcetti, who requested that flags around the city be flown at half-staff, was joined by LAPD Chief Charlie Beck. Beck said the officers were responding to a call at the time of the collision and that the preliminary investigation suggests the truck's brakes failed, which caused the "catastrophic accident."

"The chief and I were able to visit his partner and she's strong and she's going to make it through this," Garcetti said of the injured officer, who graduated from the police academy three months ago.

"This tragedy reminds us of the selflessness of our LAPD officers who put their lives on the line everyday to protect us. Amy's and my thoughts and condolences are with the families and all of their LAPD brothers and sisters today," he said. Officer Lee's body remained at the scene for several hours following the crash. Once removed, it was led by a procession of LAPD patrol vehicles.

KCAL9's Randy Paige spoke to Brad Black, an eyewitness to the crash who said he narrowly escaped being hurt. Black said he was waiting at a stop sign when he saw the patrol car drive past him on its way up the hill. Then, seconds later, he said he couldn't believe what he saw in his rear-view mirror.

"I just saw this black dust cloud coming at me and then out of the dust cloud was the yellow John Deere tumbling through," he said.

Black said he had to hit his accelerator to keep from being hit by the skip loader that was rolling end over end toward him.

He told Paige he is thankful to be alive.

"I could have been right underneath the truck. There was an angel looking over me today," he said.

CHP Officer Leland Tang said it's a miracle anyone survived the crash.

"In my 20 plus years, I gotta tell you that is the most horrific thing I've seen," he said.

The female officer, who has not been identified, remains in serious condition but is expected to survive.

Officer Lee is survived by his wife and two young daughters. Most recently, he was featured in a YouTube birthday message for a Rhode Island boy who is battling leukemia.

KTLA

LAPD Officer Killed In Collision With Big Rig Identified, 2 Others Injured

A 40-year-old veteran Los Angeles Police Department officer was killed Friday morning in a traffic collision with a big rig in Beverly Hills that left another officer and the truck's driver injured.

The flag-draped gurney carrying LAPD Officer Nicholas Lee was carried to a coroner's van before a procession on March 7, 2014. (Credit: KTLA)

The officer killed was identified Friday afternoon as Nicholas Choung Lee, 40, of Hollywood Division. His unidentified female partner was hospitalized after the collision, which occurred about 8 a.m. at the intersection of Loma Vista Drive and Robert Lane (map), according to the Beverly Hills Fire Department.

"This is a very sad day. We feel for his family. I feel for Hollywood Division, where he was so well-liked," police Chief Charlie Beck said at a news conference outside Cedars-Sinai Medical Center shortly after the crash.

The officers were responding to a "call of unknown trouble," the chief said.

A preliminary investigation showed that the truck's brakes may have failed, said Beck, who was joined at the news conference by L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti.

"On behalf of this city we grieve a hero this morning, an officer who gave his life in the service of the people of Los Angeles," Garcetti said. "Any police officer in this city and in this county, every single time they suit up, it could be the last day and today it was."

Investigators were at the scene of the crash for hours. (Credit: KTLA)

Garcetti ordered flags across the city to be lowered in honor of the fallen officer. Beverly Hills later announced that it too would lower its flags.

Lee died at the scene. The female officer, who graduated from the police academy about three months ago, was taken to the hospital, Beck said.

She and the driver of the truck, which was hauling construction debris, were expected to survive, according to Beck. The male truck driver was in serious condition, while the female officer survived with a concussion and bumps and bruises, authorities said.

"The condition that she's in, and her spirits and her smile, are nothing sort of a miracle," Police Commission President Steve Soboroff said outside Cedars-Sinai.

Officer Nicholas Lee, killed in a collision on March 7, 2014, recently appeared in a YouTube video made by LAPD in

honor of a sick child's birthday.

Lee had recently appeared in a YouTube video that LAPD made, along with other law enforcement departments across the country, to honor a Rhode Island 7-year-old battling leukemia, according to a police news release.

Lee received more than 70 commendations and had been with the department for 16 years, serving in Van Nuys, Wilshire and Hollywood areas, the release stated.

He was survived by a wife and two daughters.

Once Lee's body was removed from the crash site in Beverly Hills, it was escorted by a police procession to the coroner's office.

The cause of the crash was under investigation by the Beverly Hills Police Department and Fire Department, the LAPD and the California Highway Patrol.

The truck was traveling southbound on Loma Vista, a steep road, while the patrol car was traveling northbound, according to CHP Officer Leland Tang. Both vehicles would be towed back to a CHP yard for "full forensic mechanical analysis," Tang said.

The area surrounding the crash, next to Beverly Hills Greystone Park and Mansion, was closed Friday, as was the mansion.

Beverly Hills Courier

Loma Vista/ Doheny Rd Crash Leaves 1 LAPD Officer Dead

A crash at East Loma Vista and Doheny involving an LAPD police vehicle and an earth-moving dump truck this morning at 7:54 a.m. has resulted in the death of one veteran LAPD officer and the hospitalization of a second officer. The hospitalized officer, a rookie in her third month of training, is now at Cedars-Sinai being treated for injuries.

The training officer was identified this evening by the coroner's office as 40-year-old Nicholas Choung Lee.

BHPD Sgt. Max Subin told The Courier the street surrounding the accident would remain closed to traffic "through the evening." All traffic is being re-routed.

The information was released at a joint press conference this morning with LAPD Chief Charlie Beck and Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti in front of Cedars Sinai Hospital. Th

The surviving officer is alert and met with Chief Beck, Mayor Garcetti and Los Angeles Police Commissioner Steve Soboroff. Police spokesman Commander Andrew Smith

The City of Beverly Hills sent the following Press Release:

Traffic Accident on Loma Vista Drive -Beverly Hills City Council Extends Condolences; Flags at Half -Staff
Beverly Hills, CA – The City of Beverly Hills extends its deepest condolences to the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), the City of Los Angeles and the families of today's tragic accident

The accident resulted in one fatality, with two surviving victims who were transported to local medical facilities. The victims' names have not been officially released at this time. The City also joins Los Angeles and is flying flags at half-staff to honor the deceased officer.

"The City of Beverly Hills is committed to providing ongoing assistance towards the investigation. We share our heartfelt sympathy with everyone involved during this incredibly difficult time," stated Mayor John Mirisch.

The accident occurred within the Beverly Hills city limits at approximately 8:00 AM on Loma Vista Drive and Robert Lane. A southbound truck collided with a Hollywood Division LAPD patrol car which was responding to an unknown trouble call in the City of Los Angeles.

Due to the ongoing investigation, the area surrounding Loma Vista (adjacent to Beverly Hills Greystone Park and Mansion) will be closed for the remainder of the day. Greystone Mansion will also remain closed today. Residents should plan their commutes accordingly.

It is a multi-agency investigation which includes the Beverly Hills Police Department, Beverly Hills Fire Department, Los Angeles Police Department and the California Highway Patrol.

NBC Los Angeles

Condolences For In For LAPD Officer Who Died In Crash

Condolences began pouring in Friday for an LAPD veteran who died in a crash.

Training Officer Nicholas Choung Lee, 40, died when the patrol vehicle he was in collided with a dump truck at Loma Vista Driver near Doheny Road in Beverly Hills.

"RIP officer Nicholas Lee," wrote Kanary Diamonds on Twitter. "Prayers for your family."

LAPD Chief Charlie Beck posted a tribute to Lee on Instagram and Twitter.

"A man of greatness and selflessness," Beck called him. "Nick was a great cop. May he rest in peace."

California Attorney General Kamala Harris expressed her condolences in a statement released Friday evening.

"On behalf of the California Department of Justice, I extend my heartfelt condolences to the family, friends, and colleagues of Officer Nicholas Lee," she said. "His death is a grave loss for the dedicated men and women of the Los Angeles Police Department and the whole of California's law enforcement community. Our thoughts are also with the officer who was critically injured alongside Officer Lee."

Christopher T. Landavazo, said "not only did I lose a friend, but a fellow LAPD Officer. RIP Nick."

Lee leaves behind a wife and two young daughters. He was a 16-year veteran of the department and received over 70 commendations.

Most recently, Lee was involved in sending a live birthday card video to a 7-year-old boy suffering from Leukemia. Officers formed a line and saluted as Lee's body was moved from the crash site to a coroner's vehicle. LA Mayor Eric Garcetti and Beck also visited the scene to pay their respects.

A female probationary officer who recently graduated from the academy and the truck driver were hospitalized but both were expected to survive.

The officers were responding to a call at the time of the crash, but it was unclear whether the vehicle's lights and sirens were activated.

Flags were being flown at half-staff at City Hall following the crash.

Lee was the first LAPD officer to die in the line of duty in more than five years.

LA Observed

Nicholas Lee, LAPD officer was 40

By Kevin Roderick

Nicholas Cheong Lee is the Hollywood division officer who was killed today in the collision of his patrol car with a truck in Beverly Hills. He leaves behind a wife and two young daughters, the LAPD says. Chief Charlie Beck described Lee at a press conference today as a well-respected officer and family man. Beck also tweeted, "A man of greatness and selflessness. Nick was a great cop." From Instagram:

The photos from the scene show a police car that appears to have been crushed on the left side. The roof was removed to extricate Lee and his partner, who was injured but survived.

Her name has not yet been released.

Beck and Mayor Eric Garcetti were at the scene when Lee's body was removed from the car. Officers from the LAPD formed an honor guard to escort the remains. A motorcade led the coroner's van past the Hollywood station and a nearby LAFD station en route to the morgue.

ABC Los Angeles

LAPD officer killed in Beverly Hills truck collision

A veteran LAPD officer was killed and his rookie partner was critically injured Friday morning when their police cruiser collided with a big rig in Beverly Hills.

The crash occurred at approximately 8 a.m. at the intersection of Loma Vista Drive and Robert Lane. Authorities said the truck, which was hauling a trash container, was traveling downhill on Loma Vista Drive as the cruiser was traveling uphill. Early reports indicate that the truck driver may have lost control and then hit the cruiser. The truck may have had some kind of mechanical failure, LAPD Chief Charlie Beck said.

The injured officer and the driver of the truck were taken to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. Both are expected to survive their injuries, according to Beck.

According to LAPD Commander Andrew Smith, the officers were responding to a call of unknown trouble when the crash happened. He said they were driving to the location in Los Angeles, but they chose a route that took them just inside the edge of Beverly Hills. It was not immediately known if the cruiser's lights and sirens were on.

A sign posted at the entrance of Loma Vista Drive reads: "Vehicles over 3 tons prohibited." It was unclear why the large truck was on the road.

The Beverly Hills Police Department and the California Highway Patrol are investigating the crash.

The deceased officer was identified as 40-year-old Nicholas Choung Lee. His body was removed from the crash site around 12:30 p.m. Officers lined the street as the gurney, covered with an American flag, was moved to a coroner's van. The van was then escorted out of the area by a police procession.

Both officers were assigned to the Hollywood Division. Beck said Lee was with the department for more than a decade and is "extremely well regarded." At the time of the crash, the officer was training his rookie partner, a woman out of the police academy for about three months. She could be released from the hospital Saturday.

"This tragedy reminds us of the selflessness of our LAPD officers who put their lives on the line everyday to protect us," Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti said in a statement. "Amy's and my thoughts and condolences are with the families and all of their LAPD brothers and sisters today."

Mayor Garcetti said he personally worked with Lee several times.

"Nick embodied everything that LAPD's about: Courage, commitment, community," said Garcetti. "When being with his family, it was just heartbreaking today."

Lee is survived by his wife and two daughters, ages 6 and 10.

KPCC

Coroner names LAPD training officer killed in Beverly Hills crash

Update 6:03 p.m. The Los Angeles County coroner's office has identified the L.A. Police Department officer killed in a collision with a truck in Beverly Hills today as 40-year-old Nicholas Choung Lee.

Lee was a 14-year veteran of the LAPD, Commander Andrew Smith tells KPCC. He leaves behind a wife and two young daughters.

The California Highway Patrol officers doing the investigation said that there was some kind of mechanical malfunction with the truck that was coming down the hill as the officers were going up the hill, Smith said.

He said he doesn't know if Lee was wearing a seatbelt, but that LAPD Chief Charlie Beck is very enthusiastic about encouraging officers to wear seatbelts.

Lee was described by his coworkers as a "super nice guy" and a "community guy," Smith said, adding that "he was a good cop, and he's going to be missed."

The female trainee who was also in the crash is a probationary officer, Smith said, and she's been in the field for less

than a year. She's out of the emergency rooms and with friends, though she's wearing a neck brace. The driver of the truck was still in serious condition at the hospital, Smith said.

New York Daily News

Preaching To A Choir: De Blasio And Three Other Big City Mayors Discuss Their Lot In Life

By James Warren

Mayor de Blasio on Thursday bashed Washington and state capitals for turning their backs on urban America, preaching to a choir of his big-city peers.

He derided Tea Party congressmen as hypocrites who may come from states with big cities that need help, especially with money for infrastructure.

But, he said, "We can't curse the darkness. We have to change the politics in Washington."

His comments inspired not a scintilla of dispute during a packed forum on "Leading America's Big Cities in the 21st Century" held at the University of Chicago and featuring de Blasio and the mayors of Chicago, Los Angeles and Atlanta.

De Blasio did not specifically mention Albany, his capital, as a culprit and many of his comments were distinctly boosterish, as were those of his counterparts. He repeated calls for dealing with inequality and boasted that changes in stop and frisk have furthered crime homicides.

But he underscored an obvious reality facing all four of the mayors: "We know there is not a cavalry coming from Washington" to help cities.

His more animated musings included denying he was a foe of charter schools but arguing that they attract disproportionate attention in the media and public policy discussion.

You'll find 100 stories about charters, he said, and not one about an issue as significant as teacher retention. And when it comes to real significance, he argued, little can top the potential of the early education plan he's now pushing.

De Blasio and Mayors Rahm Emanuel of Chicago, Eric Garcetti of Los Angeles and Kasim Reed often resembled pinstriped bobblehead dolls dispatched by their respective Chambers of Commerce.

For nearly 90 minutes, they heralded the excitement of being a mayor, especially given the ability to touch people's lives and inspire change in ways that the average legislator cannot.

They similarly nodded in agreement with one another in extolling the virtues of cities as magnets for talent and innovation but bemoaning inherited financial ills and lack of support from Washington and state capitals.

And they gave chapter and verse on why their city is, well, just about as good as it gets.

"Chicago is the most American of cities," said Emanuel, who then rattled off a wealth of data about Chicago's rising fortunes, and a variety of distinct achievements, even if all tempered with admission of its disastrous underfunded pension situation and declining bond rating.

"We are a city you can bring your dreams to, a city driven by talent and merit," said Atlanta's Reed. "If you value getting a fair shot, we're the place for you."

From de Blasio: "We in New York have it all. It is a city for all, for every kind of person, we take pride in the breadth of what we have. Every kind of community, nationality."

And, sounding similarly like Reed, he heralded it as a global capital of business, communications and technology and said, "You can bring your dreams to New York."

Not to be outdone, Garcetti sold his city, Los Angeles.

"Los Angeles has been both a symbol to America and the incarnation of its highest ideals," he said. In Emanuel-like fashion, he offered upbeat statistics in rapid-fire fashion.

"We have an embarrassment of riches," he said.

David Axelrod, the journalist-turned-political consultant extraordinaire, moderated the 90-minute session. It was held under the auspices of the university's successful new Institute of Politics created by Axelrod, arguably the most important figure in the ascent of Barack Obama to the White House.

Such multi-person panels tend to be ungainly and hard to focus, all the more so with big ego Alpha males who don't talk in sound bites when not in a TV studio. And there is the unavoidable need to be democratic in eliciting responses and thus being unable to follow-up with questions about specific responses.

And this gathering, too, wandered a bit and avoided touching real policy differences, especially between a duo such as de Blasio and Emanuel. They represent distinctly different facets of Democratic Party thinking on a variety of issues, including hiking the minimum wage.

Yet it ultimately served its undoubted purpose, namely a general detailing of the lures, challenges and frustrations of being a big-time mayor.

Their collective targeting of public education as critical to their cities' futures was as obvious as the chill outside (just a short hop from the home Obama may not return to when his presidency ends)

But also interesting was how little the issue of crime came up, with all the cities experiencing recent declines

Their commonality was obvious, with a few exceptions.

Garcetti wondered aloud what all that "white stuff" was around Chicago, in the midst of an unrelenting winter.

"It's water," Emanuel immediately responded, noting that's it's a commodity not in great abundance out West.

"We can take showers year-round," said the mayor of Chicago.

New York Daily News

De Blasio In Chicago: Way, Way Too Much Public Focus On Charter School Wars

By James Warren

Charter schools are "part of the lineup" of education alternatives but get way too much attention from the media and others, Mayor de Blasio asserted Thursday.

"You'll find 100 stories on charters" but nothing on teacher retention, he said at a panel on big cities at the University of Chicago.

De Blasio was joined by the mayors of Chicago, Los Angeles and Atlanta and was largely preaching to a choir in a 90-minute discussion on the state and future of urban America.

Education was front and center, mentioned by de Blasio, Chicago's Rahm Emanuel, Los Angeles' Eric Garcetti and Atlanta's Kasim Reed as their central long-term challenge. Interestingly, it took up far more time than even the issue of crime (going down of late in all four cities).

But ongoing conflicts about charters in New York prompted a somewhat defensive response from the mayor, who noted with a smile that he was "the rookie in the group" on stage.

Too much discussion, he said, focused on "education culture wars," as opposed to how to best educate children he said. The discussion about charters, he said, "pales by comparison" in importance to discussion of issues such as early childhood education and teacher retention, he said at a prominent university that, alas, does run successful charters, too.

Under him, he said, New York is focusing on "putting our money where our mouth is" in the push for universal Pre-K. That goal "has a much greater multiplier effect," when it comes to impact, than charters, he said.

All in all, de Blasio said, the big city mayors are all "affected by is a series of political realities" that in his mind "don't conform" with larger strategic necessities and facts.

Clearly, a focus on disputes over charters is one of those realities that doesn't conform with what he feels are the real needs of the 1.1 million students in the city's public schools.

Wall Street Journal

Cheat And Eat Food Stamps

It's been merely a month since Congress passed a putatively slimmer \$1 trillion farm bill, and, surprise, Democrats have already wiped out most of its speculative \$800 million in savings this year by gaming new food-stamp eligibility rules. Republicans look like rubes for buying this dressed-up turkey.

One of the farm bill's ballyhooed reforms was closing the "heat and eat" loophole, which allows states to leverage federal funds from the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (Liheap) to raise food-stamp eligibility and payments. Fifteen states as well as Washington, D.C. participate in "heat and eat," and more may join once they realize how their liberal neighbors are milking Uncle Sam.

Under this classic liberal trick, Liheap beneficiaries automatically qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program's "standard utility allowance," which increases their food-stamp benefits. They receive this deduction regardless of how much they spend on energy. Many renters don't pay a dime.

Democratic state politicians have thus expanded their food-stamp rolls by distributing more federal heating checks, amounting to as little as \$1 per year in many states and \$0.10 in California. The heat and eat scheme is one reason annual food-stamp payouts have tripled over the last decade to about \$83 billion. Taxpayers now help foot the grocery bills for one of seven Americans.

House Republicans sought to force modest food-stamp reforms such as work requirements and asset tests in the farm bill, but they ultimately settled for raising the Liheap trigger for receiving the utility deduction to \$20 per year. The Congressional Budget Office predicted this change would affect 850,000 households—about 4% of food-stamp beneficiaries—and save \$8.6 billion over 10 years. Too bad this overlooked the incentive for states to goose heating payments.

Governor Dannel Malloy last week announced that Connecticut would "expend \$1.4 million in available federal energy assistance funding" to raise minimum Liheap payments for 50,000 beneficiaries, or about a quarter of its food-stamp rolls. The increase to a nice round \$20.01 from \$1 will "preserve approximately \$66.6 million" a year in food-stamp benefits. So Connecticut will leverage \$1 in additional federal Liheap funds to reap \$48 more from Washington for food stamps.

Mr. Malloy's neighbor Andrew Cuomo jumped for the free lunch the next day by declaring that New York would "dedicate approximately \$6 million in additional federal" heating assistance to maintain \$457 million in food-stamp payments. Democrats made this swindle possible by adding some \$169 million in additional heating assistance to cold-weather states to this year's omnibus spending bill, including \$50 million for New York. Meantime, 15 Democratic Senators have written to Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius begging for even more heat rub to assuage the food-stamp non-cuts. They were joined last week by 18 big-city mayors including Eric Garcetti from the Los Angeles tundra and Greg Stanton of the Phoenix arctic.

Republicans should have foreseen this Democratic cheat and eat, but many cared more about preserving fat subsidies for farmers than fixing food-stamp abuses. Once again, national taxpayers are footing a bipartisan meal ticket.

U of Chicago

Watch: Mayors Rahm Emanuel And Eric Garcetti On The Renaissance Of US Cities

Clip of Mayors Rahm Emanuel and Eric Garcetti speaking on the Renaissance of U.S. cities, at the IOP's Mayor's Summit, March 6th, 2014.

Chicago Crain's Business

Emanuel, Big City Mayors Talk Shop, Joke Around

Rahm Emanuel and three other mayors of some of America's biggest cities said yesterday that cities, not Washington, are driving the country's economic growth.

Bill de Blasio of New York, Eric Garcetti of Los Angeles, Emanuel of Chicago and Kasim Reed of Atlanta spoke at a forum at the University of Chicago's Institute of Politics.

The four, all Democrats, said being a big-city mayor is the best position in politics because they are able to implement new ideas quickly, without the gridlock that has paralyzed Washington and some state legislatures. As a result, they said, America's large cities are in the midst of a renaissance.

"Cities are where the action is," Reed said.

The relationship with the nation's capital is dramatically different than it was in the 1960s, when cities appealed for help and federal money flowed freely, they said. Emanuel called Washington "totally AWOL" and "a bit of Disneyland on the Potomac." Garcetti said it is now cities that are saving America, not the other way around.

"We know there is not a cavalry coming right now from Washington," de Blasio said. "Now it's what can we generate ourselves."

COMMON CHALLENGES

They discussed several common challenges: struggling schools, ballooning public pension payments, income inequality and aging infrastructure.

They also talked about solutions. De Blasio made multiple references to his proposal to offer full-day pre-kindergarten to every child in New York. Reed discussed sitting down with unions and civic officials and pressing them to "do some math" to help solve Atlanta's pension problem. Emanuel and Garcetti spoke about science and technology education programs and opportunities for summer learning.

They also agreed with Reed's suggestion that federal money should be distributed directly to cities, rather than through state governments. Reed, who was a visiting fellow this week at the Institute of Politics, said that system would allow the money to be put to use more quickly and where it's needed most. He also said city leaders are more accountable to voters.

The forum was moderated by David Axelrod, a former senior adviser to President Barack Obama who now runs the Institute of Politics.

Despite the seriousness of the issues discussed, the tone at yesterday's event was collegial and lighthearted, with each mayor doing his best to elicit laughs from the several hundred people in the audience.

Reed joked about being younger than the other mayors on the stage. Garcetti, getting in a plug for Los Angeles' mild weather, joked that he touched Chicago's snow — which he said hurt — and wasn't sure what it was.

"It's water," Emanuel deadpanned in a reference to California's drought. "We'll sell it to you at a big price."

Long Beach Post

Restoring The LA River, One Beer At A Time

By Brian Addison

Efforts to restore the L.A. River into something not just more beautiful but something more livable have been vigorously advocated for by Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti and recently by Vice Mayor and Long Beach mayoral candidate Robert Garcia, who hailed the river as becoming a possible "environmental wonder."

LA River Corporation has not only created a unique fundraising approach, but one that will make drink'n'grub lovers rejoice: a craft, canned IPA from Golden Road Brewing dedicated solely to raising funds for the restoration of the river. Every pint or four-pack you buy, a dollar goes to the LA River Corporation for Greenway 2020.

This mark's the brewery's fourth seasonal IPA choice and second benefitting a nonprofit; their first, Heal the Bay IPA, helped out, well, Heal the Bay.

Long Beachers will find the hoppy brew on draught at the Red Leprechaun at 4000 E Anaheim beginning Wednesday, March 12.

Yo Venice

Warning-Double Check Your Department Of Water And Power Bills

When Susan O. called my office, I could hardly believe the outrageous story she shared. Even though she saw a DWP meter-reader visit her house in West LA, she received a bill, based on an "estimate," and was nearly double what she usually pays.

My office gets dozens of calls a day from people asking for help cutting red tape or solving problems in their neighborhoods. Lately, more and more of these calls have been from people like Susan, who were at wit's end over incorrect and inflated DWP bills.

The Department of Water & Power replaced its 40-year old billing system last year, and the upgrade created a series of problems for tens of thousands of customers. Some people received incorrect estimates, improperly inflating their bills. Others didn't receive bills at all. Alarming, some people who signed up for automatic bill payment had huge sums deducted their checking accounts. It is wrong — and Mayor Eric Garcetti has appointed new management at DWP to fix the problems ASAP.

If you know or think you've received an incorrect bill, please follow the steps listed below. And I urge you to share this information with your neighbors, and encourage them to double-check their recent bills. This is especially important for seniors who are living on fixed incomes and may be unaware of the billing problems.

1. Check Your Bill

Please pay attention to your bill and to be wary of any possible inaccuracies. One section of your bill includes a summary of the power you used, compared to your bills from previous years. If your power use is dramatically higher,

even though you haven't significantly changed the way you use power, there is a chance you are being over-billed.

2. Visit DWP's New Billing Website

DWP has developed a new section of their website to provide information about billing inaccuracies. Please visit the site to find out more, and read a message from the new DWP General Manager Marcie Edwards for an update about what DWP is doing to address the issues.

3. Call DWP at 1-800-DIAL DWP (1-800-342-5397)

The controversy over the billing errors have been compounded by huge problems with DWP's customer service system. Many people endured sitting on hold for hours only to get an insufficient response or unhelpful reply. The new general manager has made fixing this system her top priority. Below, please find some tips to reduce wait times.

Use the new "virtual hold" system by dialing "0" after inputting your account information and leave a message for a call back;

Call Tuesday through Sunday, as Mondays are the busiest day of the week;

Call during the first hour of business, 7 a.m. to 8 a.m., or in the evening between 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., Monday through Friday, when call volumes are lower; or,

Call on Saturday or Sunday, as call volumes are approximately 40-60% lower on Saturdays and approximately 50-70% lower on Sundays compared to weekdays.

If you continue to have problems with DWP's billing or customer service systems, please do not hesitate to contact my office at (310) 575-8461 or (310) 568-8772.

These problems are unacceptable, and we need to make sure they are solved, and that you and your neighbors don't pay a penny more than you should.

Regards,

MIKE

La Opinion

Living in Los Angeles will be without funds

By Araceli Ortega

Thousands of seniors remain healthy, away from hospitals and doctors, because the programs are offered in senior centers, are within days of running out of that support.

"These are programs that empower older adults to take responsibility for their health, teaches them to manage their chronic diseases, and put them physical and mental exercises that help strengthen your well being," said Rigo Saborio, president of St. Barnabas Senior Services and the Coalition for the Elderly in Los Angeles.

It was Saborio himself who sounded the alarm and warned them said that from April the money runs out for these programs. "The evidence to show that significantly reduce unnecessary hospitalizations and doctor visits," he said. The Federal Department of Urban Development and Housing (HUD) informed the city that all programs for the elderly are not eligible and can not be funded for fiscal 2014-15, effective April 1.

Although federal funds are earmarked for economic development, the City was free to use a certain percentage to address other needs. One of these was to spend about \$ 900 thousand dollars their seniors, through the centers.

"At St. Barnabas Center removed him \$ 165,000 U.S. dollars, and short-term, we do not know how we will recover," Saborio said.

Luz Escobar 84 years who has spent four years participating in the programs of the center said that if school is canceled, it would feel very sad.

He stressed that through the programs to be cut 50 feels. "feel a rather large energy. I wake up excited to come to take my Zumba classes, and others to prevent diabetes, arthritis," he said.

The Coalition on Adult Los Angeles sent a letter to council asking for your help Gil Cedillo.

"Your assistance is needed to ensure that funding is not interrupted for these vital programs serving seniors in his district and throughout Los Angeles," he said in the letter to Cedillo. "Evidence shows that these programs reduce unnecessary hospitalizations and doctor visits, expose them.

Fredy Ceja, spokesman for Cedillo said he understands the importance of these programs in the community, and is committed to finding alternative financing. "[The council] is working with the leadership of the Council on this issue and is confident he will find a solution."

Advocates for the elderly also appealed to Mayor Eric Garcetti.

"Unfortunately, federal funding for these services were cut but the mayor Garcetti is determined to find funds to compensate," said Oliver Delgado, spokesman for the mayor.

LA Times

California Democrats kick off annual convention in Los Angeles

By Seema Mehta

California Democratic Party Chairman John Burton, welcoming delegates to their annual convention, said Friday evening that while they should savor their many victories, they must remain vigilant about them, staying involved in congressional and legislative elections this year.

He noted the party's sweep of statewide offices in 2010, and touted Gov. Jerry Brown's work to fix the state's finances. "We've done such a good job, [Republicans] are having trouble finding anyone to run against some of our candidates,"

Burton told hundreds of people gathered on the pool terrace of the Westin Bonaventure Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. But "we cannot be complacent," he said. "We have a lot of work to do" in local races, congressional contests and the Legislature.

"And that's going to take each and every one of us to get out and work," he added.

"It's tough to be enthusiastic when you think you have a cinch," Burton acknowledged, before noting that his late brother Phil lost an election to someone who had died two weeks before the voting, "so [stuff] happens."

Burton was speaking on the first night of the three-day convention, at a reception sponsored by Bay Area billionaire Tom Steyer, a new and moneyed force in national politics. Surrounded by lit skyscrapers, attendees nibbled on racks of lamb and cake pops.

A slew of other parties were also set for Friday night, including an "I Love L.A." bash hosted by Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti in a downtown park, "Funkfest!" hosted by state legislators and featuring Pharcyde at the Conga Room, and other events scattered around local hot spots.

Official business will begin Saturday, with a slew of speakers. Gov. Jerry Brown and Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley are scheduled to address the convention, and candidates for secretary of state, state controller, and legislative and congressional seats will court delegates as they seek the party's official endorsement.

LA Times

State Democrats to descend on LA for annual party convention

By Seema Mehta

Thousands of California Democrats will descend on downtown Los Angeles on Friday to kick off their annual convention, largely a celebration of the party's dominance in state politics, but also a showcase of some internal spats that leaders tried unsuccessfully to keep hidden from public view.

Gov. Jerry Brown, who last week filed to run for reelection, is expected on Saturday to outline the rationale for his bid for an unprecedented fourth term.

National figures such as Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley and San Antonio Mayor Julian Castro will also address delegates. And they'll meet with potential donors -- critical relationships they must forge if they plan to run for higher office.

O'Malley is weighing a presidential bid in 2016, and Castro is considered a rising star in the party.

California, taken for granted in presidential elections because of its cobalt blue tilt, nevertheless remains a top source of campaign dollars for Democrats across the country. Billionaire Tom Steyer, a new and significant player on the national donor scene from the Bay Area, will also speak.

California officials who are believed to have an eye on higher office plan to address delegates. They include Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, Atty. Gen. Kamala Harris and Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom.

Newsom, known for throwing the most coveted convention parties, is hosting a "Winter of Love" soiree Saturday night, featuring gay couples who wed a decade ago when he flouted state law by allowing San Francisco to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples as the city's mayor.

Earlier in the day, a transgender ordained minister will offer an invocation to kick off the convention.

But for all the celebration, fissures in the party will be highlighted in nearly a dozen endorsement battles. Nine of the competitions involve congressional and legislative races; two involve statewide contests.

Party chairman John Burton tried unsuccessfully to silence some of the fights.

"It's important that all our candidates conduct their campaigns in a way that does not weaken the Party and damage [other] Democrats," he wrote in January to Democratic candidates for controller and secretary of state.

"Involving the Party in multiple contested primaries would squander our resources early, ultimately hurting all our nominees come November," he said. "The State Convention is a time when we need Democrats to come together with the goal of electing all our nominees in November."

Most, if not all, of the candidates ignored his call and will be campaigning heavily for the party's backing. Endorsement announcements are expected Saturday evening and must be confirmed by a floor vote on Sunday.

KPBS

Los Angeles Plays Host To California Democratic Party Convention

By City News Service

The three-day California Democratic Party convention will begin Friday at the Westin Bonaventure in downtown Los Angeles with a series of committee and caucus meetings.

Delegates will finalize statewide, congressional and legislative endorsements and adopt the 2014 party platform Sunday at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

Office of Gov. Jerry Brown

Flanked by Senate President pro Tem Darrell Steinberg (left) and Assembly Speaker John A. Pérez, Gov. Jerry Brown announces a \$687-million drought relief plan, Feb. 19, 2014.

Gov. Jerry Brown, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-San Francisco, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom and Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley are scheduled to speak at general session Saturday at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

Rep. Keith Ellison, D-Minn., will speak at a luncheon Saturday, while San Antonio, Texas Mayor Julian Castro and Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Oakland, will speak at a dinner Saturday.

More than 3,000 delegates, officials, exhibitors and observers are expected to attend.

CBS Los Angeles

Democrats To Tout Calif. Recovery At Downtown LA Convention

Members of the California Democratic Party began to gather Friday in downtown Los Angeles for their annual convention.

KNX 1070's Bob Brill reports delegates will flock to the Westin Bonaventure to finalize statewide, congressional and legislative endorsements over the three-day convention before adopting the 2014 party platform Sunday at the Convention Center.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti will be among a number of high-profile politicians scheduled to speak at the general session Saturday at the Los Angeles Convention Center, along with Gov. Jerry Brown, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-San Francisco) and Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom.

More than 3,000 delegates, officials, exhibitors and observers were also expected to attend the convention, which will focus on the theme of "Renewing California by Advancing Our Values."

John Burton, chairman of the California Democratic Party, said Brown deserves credit for tackling key issues affecting the state in his first term.

"Putting his prestige on the line for that tax increases that not only got us out of the red, but pretty good into the black," Burton said. "I think that's a very good sign for the Democrats."

And as for ongoing drought conditions facing California, which is now its third straight dry year?

"Not even Jerry Brown can make it rain, so that's a problem for all of us," said Burton.

Rep. Keith Ellison, D-Minn., will speak at a luncheon Saturday, while San Antonio, Texas, Mayor Julian Castro and Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Oakland, will speak at a dinner Saturday.

Wave

Consultant report is critical of LA City Fire Department

By Wave Wire Services

Management of the Los Angeles Fire Department needs to be streamlined, with the agency divided into four geographic bureaus, the "cumbersome" disciplinary process overhauled and the fire chief given a five-year employment contract, according to a consultant report released Monday.

The report by PA Consulting, which was hired to review the deployment of Fire Department resources after concerns arose about the department's reporting of response times, also called for filling nearly 200 positions with civilian employees instead of sworn LAFD personnel, and found that the department suffers from a "cultural aversion to change and fear of litigation."

Though worries raised by city leaders often focused on funding, management appears to be the bigger issue facing the department, City Administrative Officer Miguel Santana said of the report's findings.

The Fire Department budget increased from \$472 million in the 2011-12 fiscal year to \$550 million this year, a financial trajectory that "few departments in the city have experienced," he said.

"Clearly the finances have actually improved," he said. "When you take that out of the equation, then you're forced to look at the overall management of the department."

The report recommends the appointment of a deputy chief to oversee the agency's paramedic operations, which account for the majority of the department's calls.

"The dedication, heroism and commitment to excellence of the department's men and women are unquestioned and lead to exceptional performance in terms of limiting 'fire loss' relative to other U.S. departments," the report said. "However, the multiple interviews conducted ... with LAFD command staff, as well as with key city stakeholders and other U.S. fire departments and public safety agencies revealed significant cultural, organizational, process and technology challenges which seriously impair the department's performance."

The report found that the job of fire chief has devolved into a "revolving position, which has destabilized the LAFD." It also found that some deputy, assistant and battalion chiefs have been put in positions despite lacking technical skills, and the rotation system of assistant and battalion chiefs prevents them from developing experience to improve the department.

The system has also led to a lack of support and loyalty among the rank-and-file for the chief.

"The disciplinary process is broken, driven by fear of litigation, reprisals and the perception that it is a 'no-win' situation," the report said. "The department is not sufficiently able to manage performance outside of the disciplinary process."

The report also recommends hiring civilians to serve in management positions and calls for 193 positions to be "civilianized." Some of the civilian positions would include employee relations director, communications directors, data analysis director and a new chief technology officer.

The Los Angeles Police Department underwent a similar switch from sworn to civilian employees over the past 10 to 15 years, and it is a model that has been adopted by fire and rescue departments outside the United States, according to the report.

The United Firefighters of Los Angeles City, the union that represents city firefighters, refused an invitation to review and get a briefing on a draft version of the report, Santana said.

Union President Frank Lima said the consultants did not ask the union for input during the preparation of the report and "on first blush" he is "amazed at the lack of professionalism" displayed by the consultant.

"It is no different than a consulting firm hired to do a study about the game of baseball, and never talking to any baseball players," with the report registering "zero to little credibility" to the union, Lima said.

Mayor Eric Garcetti's office responded to the report by saying the mayor has hired a "reform-focused" interim chief — Jim Featherstone — and Fire Commission, and appointed an assessor to improve accountability within the department. The Fire Commission is expected to order an internal investigation into the department's recruiting process, which has come under fire after the Los Angeles Times reported that 20 percent of the people in the department's most recent

recruit class were related to current firefighters. The Times also reported that thousands of applicants were rejected because they failed to submit required paperwork within a 60-second window.

Featherstone said he welcomed the report's recommendations and said he was committed to changing the "structure and operations" of the department.

"I have already begun implementing a number of changes, including initiating a hiring process for a chief technology officer, the hiring of a civilian public information director, the reorganization of key command staff, the upcoming implementation of FIRESTAT, the ongoing implementation of the automatic vehicle locator program and examining the feasibility of dividing the department operations into four geographic areas," he said.

LA Times

LA advised to pay \$185,000 to driver hit by Huizar's SUV

By Dave Zahniser

Attorneys for Los Angeles have recommended that the City Council pay \$185,000 to settle a lawsuit over a car crash involving Councilman Jose Huizar, according to records and interviews.

The payment stems from an incident in 2012, in which Huizar — driving a city-owned SUV — rear-ended a car driven by David Ceja, a former Huntington Park police officer.

Humberto Guizar, Ceja's lawyer, described the payment as a compromise, saying that he could have "possibly gotten a seven-figure amount" had the case gone to trial. Ceja has had epidural injections in his lower back and may need surgery as a result of the collision, Guizar said.

"This was not a minor fender-bender, where he just had some muscle spasms," he added. "He had a serious spinal injury."

The payout still requires a vote by the council. A spokesman for Huizar, who represents neighborhoods stretching from downtown to Eagle Rock, said the councilman had no comment.

The proposed settlement comes two months after a city car carrying Mayor Eric Garcetti hit a pedestrian one block from City Hall. Juliet Nicolas, 60, was hospitalized for three days after she was struck by the mayor's SUV, which was driven by a police officer. No legal claims have been filed against the city so far as a result of that collision, officials said.

The city also paid \$7,500 in 2007 to a pedestrian in Echo Park who was hit in the arm by a city car driven by Garcetti when he was a councilman.

In the 2012 accident, Ceja was stopped at a red light on 1st Street in Boyle Heights when his Saturn L200 was struck from behind by Huizar's 2008 Toyota Highlander. The impact totaled Ceja's car and pushed it into a third vehicle.

Lawyers for the city declined to comment. But a confidential memo prepared by lawyers for City Atty. Mike Feuer said Ceja has incurred \$65,000 in medical expenses so far. A copy of that memo was obtained by The Times.

"Given the fact that the city will be found liable and that the damages are clear and adverse to the city, we believe that it is in the city's interest to resolve this," said the memo, which argues in favor of paying the \$185,000.

Two months after the accident, Guizar filed a legal claim on Ceja's behalf seeking \$510,000. At the time, he questioned whether Huizar, 45, received special treatment from Los Angeles Police Department investigators. Guizar said police waited 2 1/2 hours to administer a Breathalyzer test to Huizar to determine whether he had been drinking.

Huizar tested at 0% and was not arrested. The legal limit for blood-alcohol content is 0.08%.

Asked about those issues Friday, Guizar said he now has "no concerns" about the way police handled Huizar. "I know he has issues in his home, personal issues, and I didn't want to drag him through the mud on this case," he said. "If we can resolve it for his sake and my client's sake, it's all good."

Last year, Huizar's youngest daughter was diagnosed with leukemia. In addition, he and the city are being sued by Francine Godoy, a former Huizar staffer who has accused the councilman of sexual harassment.

Huizar has called Godoy's allegations false, but said he did have a consensual relationship with Godoy, one that caused him to apologize to his wife and focus on repairing his marriage.

Daily News

LA Fashion Week bringing in big names despite lesser known reputation

By Sandra Barrera

Now that the Oscars are over, L.A.'s real fashion show is about to begin.

VIPS from the worlds of retail, media and showbiz are converging on Los Angeles this weekend for the launch of Style Fashion Week at L.A. Live: five days of runway shows, product launches and installations, all spotlighting dozens of designers, brands and local businesses.

The March 9-13 event's 20,000 attendees bring a ton of business into the city's hotels, restaurants, stores and nightlife. And the shows highlight an industry that contributes more than \$40 billion to the Los Angeles and Orange County economies.

Still, L.A. is the runt of Fashion Week compared with other cities — New York, Paris, London and Milan — for a reason, said Ilse Metchek, president of the California Fashion Association.

Angelenos find it hard to earn haute couture cred in part because here, the industry is dominated by denim, casual ready-to-wear and children's garment manufacturers. It's not driven by sophisticated, complicated pieces.

And the style icons here don't hail from the world of high fashion.

"Ours is not an industry based on fashion shows," Metchek said. "Our fashion comes from the street — what the Kardashians are wearing, what we see on TV, what Miley Cyrus is doing. That's what we do."

While the other cities produce over-the-top shows around cutting-edge designers in pursuit of endorsement deals and a page in Vogue, L.A. is about fashion-forward trends. A buyer's market if you will.

"What you'll see at L.A. Fashion Week is hundreds of buyers taking notes and looking at what will be in stores for fall," Metchek said. "At Style Fashion Week, you'll see bloggers who will get media exposure for the exhibitors rather than orders."

But this year's Style Fashion Week — the single biggest event in L.A.'s overall Fashion Week — is a symbol of how hard the city has worked to overcome its off-the-rack reputation.

Back in 2008, the local industry took a serious blow when Mercedes-Benz — which sponsors prestigious Fashion Weeks in New York, Berlin and other cities worldwide — pulled its backing of L.A.'s event. That sent a signal to the entire industry and dimmed the fashion spotlight on Los Angeles.

Enter Veronica Welch.

A PR professional, Welch came up with a plan to put Los Angeles Fashion Week on the map once and for all. Insiders scoffed at her vision, calling it a lost cause. But to her, creating what would become Style Fashion Week by 2011 seemed like the solution to a mystery that had long baffled her.

"It still doesn't make sense to me how L.A., which has so many designers, so many manufacturers, so many celebrities that live there, didn't have a legitimate fashion week," she says.

Now Welch's pipe dream opens its 7th biannual season Sunday as the city's biggest, star-studded fashion party around. Part of Style Fashion Week's vision, for example, is expecting its young designers to "look like they're already established although they're new" if they want to be part of the show.

"I think we all know after you've seen two or three fashion shows, you've pretty much seen it," Welch said. "The challenge is really how do we create an entire week of day-to-night performances, celebrities, musicians and shows that keep editors and guests coming back for more."

And even though Los Angeles is still in the shadow of New York and the others, it is gradually earning respect.

"I think when designers are striving for that (high fashion) they tend to take their shows to New York," said Leslie Fremar, the stylist behind Charlize Theron's '50s silhouette on Oscar night and an Ask.com contributor. "I can see why it would be hard, but I think L.A. has really come into its own and broken down a lot of those stereotypes and is doing interesting things."

Style Fashion Week was also honored at City Hall on Wednesday and Mayor Eric Garcetti plans to attend opening night. In part, that's also a recognition of how much the industry itself contributes to Los Angeles.

"L.A. is the creative capital of the world, and the fashion industry is a key element of our creative ecosystem and economy," Garcetti said. "I want L.A. to not just be the place that sets the trends, but the place that puts people to work creating and manufacturing them."

According to the Fashion Industry Association, the industry provides jobs to more than 73,000 people in Los Angeles. That's second only to New York City, which has 121,000 employed in the industry. Apparel and textiles are the second largest commodity sector coming through the Port of Los Angeles, trailing automobiles.

FASHION STEPPINGSTONE

Among one of the more popular events during L.A. Fashion Week is Project Ethos, a showcase of emerging talents in fashion, music and art. The show at the Avalon Hollywood on March 18 is open to the public with tickets priced \$20 to \$100, plus fees. Tickets can be purchased online at <http://projectethos.tv>.

Think "hunky, hot men" wearing eco-friendly Wood Underwear, models sashaying down the catwalk in gowns by "Project Runway" alum Layana Aguilar in her West Coast debut and bikini-clad bods showcasing designs by the brand Indah Clothing, which just made a splash in Sports Illustrated. The event also features DJ sets and live music by electro-soul duo Denitia and Sene. Upstairs, attendees can explore a henna tattooing exhibit by Mehndi artist Neha Assar, the gun violence messages in the art of 11-year-old artist Charles Gitnick of Woodland Hills and a creation in progress by street artist Paige Smith.

"Everyone always wants to hype up the fashion but it's a whole experience for people that night," said Brianne Bear, chief operating officer of Project Ethos. "It's about curating events with different types of art mediums — DJ acts as well as live bands, different kinds of fashion from ready-to-wear to couture, swimwear, street wear because at the end of the day we're trying to excite the crowd and make sure there are elements that buyers and art gallery dealers are going to be pleased with as well."

For participants, L.A. Fashion Week is a steppingstone.

Style Fashion Week alum Skingraft just showcased its latest creations at Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in New York and its line is worn by Justin Bieber. Alternative Apparel's collection of ready-to-wear basics attracted international buyers after its show.

"All of these opportunities are wonderful; unfortunately, these opportunities are only available to someone with a huge backing; and that's the problem," said Elisa Randazzo, designer of Cameo Clothing, an ethical, sustainable line made in L.A. from fabric that's mostly milled locally and has been seen around town on stars like Heidi Klum, Kate Hudson and Rachel Bilson.

While she's never showcased her wears at L.A. Fashion Week, Randazzo has attended the shows both as a stylist and an observer over the years.

"I started out my line with \$5,000," she said. "What shows can I do? And can I get into Fashion Week? That's a different and very expensive road to take."

Depending on the show, participating in Fashion Week can cost a designer upwards of \$50,000.

While it's still in its infancy, Style Fashion Week is growing. In October, the event moved its platform from Vibiana to a 42,000-square-foot tent at L.A. Live and "quadrupled" in size. That spring show saw famous faces like Lindsay Lohan, Adam Lambert and Dita Von Teese in the crowd. This time around is expected to be bigger given the show's growing roster of designers from all over the world, including "Project Runway" alumni Michael Costello, who designed the sheer

floral lace gown that Beyonce wore to the Grammys.

Fashion icon Betsey Johnson, up-and-comer Quayn Paris and more will also send their latest creations down the catwalk.

Yes, in L.A.

"People always talk about how we'll never be Milan, we'll never be New York — and that's absolutely correct, we actually don't want to be," Welch said, chuckling. "We're L.A., where people are beautiful and the styles are amazing. It's definitely different than everything else.

"Yet, it is very fashionable."

Gazette

Elections 2014: Forums, Endorsements

By Harry Saltzgaver

Election 2014 is a weekly roundup of campaign news and notes about the 2014 municipal and state elections. To submit an item, email editor@gazettes.com. Note: Last week's election news can be found online at www.gazettes.com.

More chances to hear candidates, led by the Gazette's forum with candidates for city prosecutor and city attorney, are on tap before the April 8 municipal election. In the next week, the forums and debates include:

- Tonight, there is a First District candidates' forum at 6:30 p.m. at Stevenson Elementary School, 515 Lime Ave., and a Seventh District forum from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Petroleum Club, 3636 Linden Ave. The Petroleum Club event, sponsored by the Los Cerritos and California Heights neighborhood associations, also will feature 20-minute mini-debates for candidates for city attorney and city prosecutor.

- A candidates' brunch sponsored by the NLB Community Action Group, Deforest Neighborhood Association, American Legion Post 560, The Long Beach Dairy and Creamery and the NAACP brings together municipal, county and state candidates in an informal setting from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Historic Dairy and Creamery, 167 E. South St.

- Candidates for city prosecutor Rosemary Chavez and Doug Haubert will square off, followed by a second forum with city attorney candidates James Johnson, Matt Pappas and Charles Parkin starting at 7 p.m. Monday at the law offices of Keesal, Young and Logan on the 14th floor of the Union Bank Building, 400 Ocean Gate. Questioning the candidates will be Rich Archbold, public editor of the Press-Telegram, and Harry Saltzgaver, executive editor of Gazette Newspapers. Gazette Newspapers is sponsoring the forum.

Mayor Bob Foster's endorsement of Robert Foster made the biggest news last week, and big endorsements continued this week:

- Bonnie Lowenthal was endorsed for mayor this week by Gov. Jerry Brown. Civil rights leader Dolores Huerta also endorsed Lowenthal.
- Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom gave his endorsement to Robert Garcia for mayor.
- Los Angeles City Attorney Eric Garcetti endorsed James Johnson for city attorney.
- Former Mayor Beverly O'Neill endorsed Megan Kerr in her campaign for the 1st District seat on the Long Beach Unified School District board.
- Uduak-Joe Ntuk, also running for the 1st District LBUSD seat, was endorsed by the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor (AFL-CIO). The labor group also endorsed Bonnie Lowenthal for mayor.
- Ntuk also won an endorsement from state Sen. Ricardo Lara.
- Dr. Juan Benitez, candidate for District 3 on the LBUSD board, has been endorsed by the Long Beach chapter of the California Faculty Association, the Laborers Local 507 and the AFSCME District Council 36.
- Los Angeles City Councilman Joe Busciano has endorsed Patrick O'Donnell in the race for the 70th District state Assembly seat.
- John McGinnis, seeking another term as 3rd District LBUSD board representative, has been endorsed by the Association of Long Beach Educational Managers and Confidential Employees (ALBEM).
- Jim Lewis, candidate for Third District City Council, has been endorsed by former Police Chief Carl Calkins and Mick Ukleja, president and CEO of Leadership TraQ. He also lists two Palm Desert elected officials, both former mayors, endorsing him for his leadership there, and Long Beach homeless advocate Gary Shelton.
- Former Chamber of Commerce Chair Blake Christian is hosting a fundraiser for Lewis next Monday, March 10, at Gladstone's.
- Rex Richardson, candidate in the Ninth District City Council race, has received the Sierra Club endorsement.
- Stella Ursua, who is running for trustee on the Long Beach Community College board in Area 3, is being endorsed by the HONOR PAC.
- Steve Neal, candidate for the 64th District of the state Assembly, has been endorsed by the Long Beach LAMBDA Democratic Club.
- Former Long Beach Fire Chief Harold Omel has endorsed Damon Dunn for mayor.

Fox News

Deporter In Chief? Obama's Base Turning Against Him Over Inaction On Immigration

By Elizabeth Llorente

The criticism of President Obama over the record number of deportations during his tenure has peaked this week on the heels of a speech by a leading Latino civil rights group head that blamed him for separating families.

The mounting, years-long frustration among advocates of more lenient immigration policies over the nearly 2 million deportations burst onto the national radar on Tuesday night when Janet Murguía, head of the National Council of La Raza, or NCLR, said in a way more pointed than the group ever has regarding the president that he is responsible for

separation of many families and that he has become the "Deporter-in-Chief."

Murguia did not coin the term – it's been around in reference to Obama and deportation as far back as early 2011. It's unclear who used it first.

And her assertion – that while Congress has failed to act to reform immigration, the President has many tools at his disposal to address certain problems undocumented immigrants face – is one that lenient-immigration-policy advocates have made since at least two years after he moved to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

But her stature, and the megaphone of the NCRL, gave the old arguments and buzz phrases a high-octane push.

Every day since Murguia took Obama to task, immigration advocacy groups and members of Congress who support comprehensive reform that includes giving breaks to undocumented immigrants have picked up the ball and run with it. They're sending daily emails, holding telephone press conferences, planning a "day of action" – all stressing the failures of the "Deporter-in-Chief," a term they are using religiously in their message this week.

The heat on the president has grown so hot these days that at a town hall meeting with Latinos at the Newseum on Thursday, he said that on immigration, he has been the "Champion-in-Chief."

"Since I ran for president, I've pushed for comprehensive immigration reform, and I will continue to push," Obama said, according to published reports. "I am the Champion-in-Chief of comprehensive immigration reform. But until Congress passes new laws, I am constrained in what I am able to do."

Rep. Luis Gutierrez, an Illinois Democrat who is one of the leading voices in Congress pushing for immigration reform, has for years challenged Obama to use his executive powers more to address aspects of the issue.

On Friday, Gutierrez and Murguia plan to hold a joint telephonic press briefing on immigration to take Obama to task. A press release about the call noted that both the congressman and Murguia have raised the issue of "the President and his use of prosecutorial discretion to reduce the pain that deportations are causing in immigrant communities."

The pro-reform advocacy community has shifted its focus to the president and stopping the deportations from its focus on comprehensive immigration reform legislation – at least in the short term.

"If Republicans don't act in the next two or three months on legislation in the House," said Frank Sharry, head of America's Voice, an advocacy group in Washington, D.C., "then most of the immigration reform campaign will focus on President Obama and the demand that he use every ounce of his executive authority to protect undocumented immigrants."

On Wednesday, Gutierrez took to the House floor to point a finger of blame on Obama.

"Republicans are currently sitting on their hands when it comes to immigration reform because they say they cannot trust the President of the United States to enforce immigration laws," Gutierrez said to his colleagues in the House, where Republicans have the majority.

"Which President deported a population slightly larger than the population of the entire State of Nebraska?" Gutierrez asked rhetorically. "With almost 2 million people deported so far, Barack Obama has deported more people than those that live in the entire State of Nebraska. President Obama gets first place, if you can call it that. So I will put a gold star next to his picture."

Then he asked: "Who spent more on immigration enforcement than all other criminal federal law enforcement combined? Well, if you guessed Barack Obama you'd be right. His almost \$18 billion is \$3.5 more than we spend on the FBI, ATF, DEA, Secret Service – all of them – combined."

And then: "Which of these Presidents put more than 420,000 people in detention in just one single year of his presidency – meaning incarceration in a private or government jail or other facility? President Obama has detained more immigrants in jails, prisons and detention facilities than any other President."

The top ranking for various immigration enforcement records, he said, belonged to Obama, "The Deporter-in-Chief," Gutierrez said.

In November, Obama was heckled by Ju Hong, an activist who yelled at him, "use your executive power to halt deportations," while they were both standing on a stage at an immigration reform rally in San Francisco.

Obama argued at the time that his executive powers on deportations are limited.

"If, in fact, I could solve all these problems without passing laws in Congress, then I would do so," Obama said. "But we're also a nation of laws. That's part of our tradition. And so, the easy way out is to try to yell and pretend like I can do something by violating our laws."

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) said last month that Obama should review his deportation powers.

"I would hope that administratively, the president will do what he can to take a look at deportations, but he is being burdened by the law as it exists, and we need to change it," he told the Las Vegas Review-Journal.

Reid, however, gave the president political cover on Tuesday, shortly after seven Senate Democrats voted against Debo Adebile, Obama's nominee to head the Civil Rights Division at the Justice Department, an embarrassing setback.

"I, of course, believe in family unification, and certainly, I don't believe in family disunification. One way to put this to bed once and for all is to have the Republicans do what they should do for the American people and move forward on immigration law," he said.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti jumped into the fray on Wednesday during a visit to Mexico's capital.

Garcetti, on his first foreign trip since taking office in July, said he supports Obama on immigration reform but said families and communities have been divided by the president's policy of deportations, which have totaled nearly 2 million since Obama took office.

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Los Angeles River After The Storm

<http://www.kcet.org/socal/departures/lariver/confluence/river-notes/los-angeles-river-after-the-storm.html>

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When Big Numbers Roamed The Hills Of Los Angeles

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County health department betrays respect our elders deserve: Editorial

<http://www.dailynews.com/opinion/20140307/county-health-department-betrays-respect-our-elders-deserve-editorial>

Artbound Special Episode:The Machine Project Field Guide To LA Architecture

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At risk teens ready to conquer LA Marathon

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Galpin design team inducted into National Rod & Custom Hall Of Fame

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Housing:**LA and Orange County are the epicenter of overcrowding housing**

<http://www.latimes.com/local/la-me-crowding-20140308,0,6827011.story>

Public Safety:**Heavy Duty Truck Had 'Some Sort Of Malfunction' In Crash That Killed Veteran LAPD Officer**

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Playa del Rey home break in caught on camera; suspects sought

http://abclocal.go.com/kabc/story?section=news/local/los_angeles&id=9458033

Mother of boys found wandering in South LA charged with child abuse

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-mother-wandering-toddlers-charged-child-abuse-20140307,0,5381493.story#axzz2vK9jts5>

Officials alarmed at the high number of fire deaths; urge residents to check smoke detectors

<http://www.scpr.org/news/2014/03/07/42669/officials-alarmed-at-the-high-number-of-fire-death/>

West LA apartment blaze causes 12th fire related death of the year

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-west-la-fire-death-20140307,0,1857992.story#axzz2vKAOZMk3>

Palms Apartment Fire Kills One

<http://venice.patch.com/groups/police-and-fire/p/palms-apartment-fire-kills-one>

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<http://ktla.com/2014/03/07/woman-60-killed-in-fire-at-apartment-in-palms-area-lafd/>

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3.2 magnitude earthquake hits Marina Del Rey

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3.2 Earthquake Strikes Near Marina Del Rey

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3.2 earthquake strikes Marina del Rey area

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Magnitude 3.2 Earthquake Strikes Marina Del Rey Area

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LA Marathon Security Boosted After Boston Attacks

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Street Closures Planned From Dodger Stadium To Ocean For LA Marathon

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Pledge drive success! Modesto likely will get new flights to LAX

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Gubernatorial candidate Kashkari attacks Brown pet project bullet train

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LA Unemployment Rate Drops, More Jobs In County

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